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CONFERENCE  
TO  
PROMOTE THE EMPLOYMENT OF  
BLIND PERSONS  
IN  
U. S. CIVIL SERVICE OCCUPATIONS

*Presented By*

THE NEW YORK ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND

THE LIGHTHOUSE

111 East 59th Street, New York, New York

*under a Grant from*

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION ADMINISTRATION

MARY E. SWITZER, *Commissioner*

Department of Health, Education, and Welfare  
Washington, D. C.

GEORGE WASHINGTON HOTEL

Lexington Avenue & 23rd Street  
New York, New York

*October 8th and 9th, 1964*

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FORWARD  
by  
Fred L. Crawford

The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor who is confronted with the many pressures of work today finds it more and more difficult to perform a most important part of his job, that of holding face-to-face discussions with employers regarding positions which are suitable for qualified people who happen to have a disability.

The Federal Government is the Nation's largest single employer and, like many large employers, has found it necessary to establish practices and procedures for recruiting, screening, and assigning applicants to suitable positions. The business of selecting employees for Government service is the responsibility of the United States Civil Service Commission, which has embodied in its structure provision for the appointment of Coordinators for the Handicapped. The job of the Coordinator is to promote, within his agency, the practice of hiring disabled persons with ability to fill vacancies.

The New York Association for the Blind (the Lighthouse), with the aid of a short-term, training Grant from the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare was pleased to host this Conference which brought together State Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and Civil Service Coordinators for the Handicapped from a number of areas throughout Civil Service Region II. Although the Lighthouse is a private agency which primarily services clients who reside in New York City, it shares concern about all activities which relate to the effective training and employment of blind people.

The Conference Planning Committee selected keynote speakers and appointed group leaders. The proceedings of the Conference includes keynote addresses and group reports -- which are presented herein -- with the hope that the noteworthy exchange of ideas that prevailed throughout the Conference may be shared with those interested persons who were unable to attend. Informal guidelines were established for groups in that each group was asked to explore areas covered by a keynote speaker. Group leaders were charged with the authority, however, to remain flexible enough to allow their group to discuss those things which were of chief interest and concern to group members. Each of the four groups was made up of a number of Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and Civil Service Coordinators or Personnel Officers homogeneous to the geographic location of their work areas.

Those of us who were privileged to participate in the Conference hope that this beginning may serve to initiate the development of many such Conferences in the years to come.

## OPENING REMARKS

by  
Wesley D. Sprague

The purpose of this workshop is for us to get to better understand each other and each other's job, rules and regulations under which we work, and conventions by which each of us tries to carry out his respective assignments.

We consist of twenty from Civil Service (Coordinators or Personnel Officers) and twenty from the corresponding area of the Commissions for the Blind (Counselors) from the States of New Jersey and New York. There are seven Counselors from New Jersey and thirteen from New York. Needless to say, we are most pleased that we have such a representative group meeting today in what we are told is a pilot program to bring about more employment opportunities for the blind under Civil Service.

After we get through this day and a half Conference, we will better know and understand the counter-part with whom we are called upon to work, from time to time, within our corresponding area. This will be effected by the interchange that will take place in work groups where personnel from like areas in Civil Service or Commissions for the Blind are assigned.

We would like, therefore, to have each of us, for a day and a half and with a minimum of daily home pressures, maintain an open and receptive mind. This attitude will allow us to have a free give-and-take experience, an exchange of ideas, trends, and rules and regulations under which we find ourselves in our various occupational assignments. We therefore hope that this green-light approach will effect ways and means by which we can more readily work more effectively together in the future.

We are not, by the way, assigning or charging anybody specifically. In other words, Civil Service people, we are not going to put a shotgun to your temple and require you to agree to take a higher percentage of blind employees in the future. This is not our purpose; we are here for an educational exchange! As long as we can have this and similar opportunities, much can be accomplished for the eventual good of the blind.

After our general session here for the forepart of the morning--which will consist of two speakers, a coffee break, and two more speaking sessions--we will break up into four work groups. Two groups will meet on this floor and two on the mezzanine floor. Your Program will show you to which group and area you are assigned. We are now in Terrace Room B; Terrace Room A is right behind us to the left. The Washington Room and Parlor A are on the mezzanine floor to the right as you get off the elevator. Each group will consist of nine to ten members, a group leader, and faculty who will rotate among the groups and act as resource people.

We are most pleased to have had all of your help, especially Mr. Baer's and Mr. Kelly's, Miss McVeigh's, and the two gentlemen here on the platform, from Washington and Harrisburg, Drs. MacFarland and Yoder, whom you'll be hearing from and who have worked with us on the Planning Committee for this Conference.

Again may I say how fortunate we are to have this opportunity to meet and discuss ways and means by which each of us can do a more effective job in planning employment opportunities for the blind. This relaxed, informal atmosphere should set the stage for long range good. I am sure that with your collective help the objectives of this Conference will be achieved. Moreover, I am sure that each of you will do your best to foster similar opportunities for formal and informal exchanges to thereby guarantee lasting effectiveness of the seeds of understanding and mutual concern that will be sown at this Conference.

# FUNDAMENTAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL BROAD CONCEPTS APPLYING TO FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT

by  
Lawrence H. Baer

I am delighted and grateful for the opportunity to discuss with you the topic which you have assigned to me, "Fundamental and Philosophical Broad Concepts Applying to Federal Employment." I shall attempt to relate those concepts to the excellent work the "Lighthouse" is doing to secure a good life and better employment opportunities for our blind citizens. We greatly admire your fine contribution in behalf of the sightless.

In preparing this paper I have drawn liberally from two Addresses by John W. Macy, Jr., Chairman of the U. S. Civil Service Commission -- both in 1963, one at the Annual National Meeting of the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped, and the other at the National Convention of the National Federation of the Blind.

Nearly 82 years ago the Congress, when it established the Civil Service Merit System, laid down the firm principle of equality of employment opportunity. You will recall that under the Civil Service Act of 1883, all citizens may compete for Federal jobs. We all know, however, that merely stating a principle is no guarantee that it will be followed in practice.

I recall with interest some of the regulations, procedures and practices that indeed ran counter to the principle of equal employment opportunity when I first came to work with the U. S. Civil Service Commission 34 years ago. Older workers were prevented from taking Civil Service examinations by arbitrary age limits. Many positions were restricted to men only. Rigid and unrealistic physical standards for all jobs, without regard to the very wide variations in actual job requirements, made it impossible for the physically handicapped to seek positions in the Federal Service. Gradually such restrictions and limitations were removed but, again, that in itself did not encourage those who sought Federal employment to compete under adverse circumstances or to make sure that, having passed the necessary examination, they would receive fair consideration for such employment.

Positive efforts were required to make more certain that our older citizens, the physically disadvantaged, and others who had not had equal employment opportunity under the Merit System were actually spurred on to apply for such employment and that, if qualified, they really got equal and understanding treatment from appointing officials. I should like to tell you about some of those positive efforts that have been made with respect to the physically handicapped and more especially with respect to the blind.

It was just about 20 years ago that the U. S. Civil Service Commission started its vigorous campaign to prove to Federal employers that it was good business practice to employ the physically handicapped. It was obvious that a handicapped employee properly placed was not handicapped at all. As my boss, Nicholas J. Oganovic, Deputy Executive Director of the Commission, pointed out in the October-December 1961 issue of the Civil Service Journal, "It's our thinking that's handicapped." But it took considerable effort to change old

habits, old prejudices, old fears.

From 1944 to 1957 the Commission slowly, bit by bit, cut away at the troublesome problem of changing Federal employer attitudes and biases. Our Medical Officers made an exhaustive survey of Federal jobs to determine exactly which physical abilities were actually needed in each job, and thereby to establish truly realistic minimum standards for specific jobs in place of the pre-existing "practically perfect" physical requirements. This was an extremely important as well as difficult accomplishment. You may be interested to know that that objective study was the first of its kind to be made by medically trained personnel. Some 15,000 different types of Government jobs have been examined in this way. Guides for the placement of physically handicapped were issued. The initial surveys were broadly divided into such categories as orthopedic defects, impaired vision, impaired hearing, chronic disease, organic heart disease, and arrested tuberculosis. As you know, we later and more recently extended our studies to the mentally restored and the mentally retarded. As a matter of fact we are still trying to change employer attitudes with reference to employing the mentally restored and the mentally retarded.

Another most important improvement was an amendment to the Civil Service Act which specifically prohibits discrimination on the basis of physical handicap. The Civil Service Commission was given the responsibility of seeing to it that no person should so be discriminated against if, in its opinion, he can efficiently perform the duties of the position without hazard to himself or to others.

Coincidentally the Commission undertook the modification of many of its standard competitive tests to meet those cases in which a certain kind of disability would prevent a competitor from demonstrating his real competence to do the job. Those modified tests were in no way easier tests. They were merely changed to make them fair to all competitors. They met that fundamental broad concept applying to Federal employment which seeks the best qualified person for each job. Accordingly the handicapped applicant must qualify under the same standards of training, ability, and performance that the non-handicapped must meet.

Some of you may be acquainted with modified tests as they apply to the blind. The typing test, for example, requires all competitors to be rated on the same scale of speed and accuracy. Blind competitors, however, are given dictating machine records to type from instead of printed sheets of paper.

Or let us consider that type of test described as "abstract reasoning." The applicant must examine matched groups of small abstract figures on a printed page as, for example, circles with tangents in different positions, pairs of lines that touch and don't touch, arcs of circles with dots inside or outside the curve, and so on, and then he must identify what makes them alike and what makes them different. This is one of a battery of tests used in some of our most difficult examinations. We now have these figures embossed, in a much larger size, on heavy mats similar to the stereotypes used by newspapers. The blind competitor reads them with his fingers and dictates his answers to the examiner.

Or, again, the blind competitor may be taking a test for accuracy which requires the sighted individual to match a little measuring gauge, printed on a

card, with rectangles of various sizes printed on sheets of paper. For this test the blind competitor is given a sheet of heavy plastic with raised shapes on it and a small metal bar. He matches the bar with the raised figures and tells the examiner which ones are the same size.

Finally there is our test for speed and precision in following instructions, ordinarily printed. Instead, the blind competitor uses a wooden board set with map pins in groups of 5 horizontal and 5 vertical rows. The heads of the pins are blue, except for one pin in each row which is yellow. The blind competitor is told to remove a certain pin in each row, "Pin C in Row 2", in rapid succession. The correct pin in each row is the yellow one, so that the total number of yellow pins removed is the correct score.

We have made and are making many modifications of this kind. For all of these tests and for all others like them there is one competitor and one examiner. This is in sharp contrast with the testing of sighted competitors who are examined in groups with a single examiner, even where the groups are very large. Every blind competitor has an examiner to himself. Indeed this is, it seems to me, the most important of all test modifications for the blind.

A major milestone and the most effective phase of our program for hiring the handicapped came in 1957 when the Commission called upon the Heads of Federal agencies to designate Coordinators for the selective placement of the handicapped. The Commission came to the realization that personal attention to the process of matching men and jobs was needed and that it wasn't possible for the Commission alone to provide it. The Coordinator System was devised for this purpose. It is now the very backbone of the program. It was the last important step adopted to change policy in the Federal Civil Service in connection with the hiring of the physically handicapped, a change from allowing equal opportunity to insisting upon it.

The Coordinator System requires the manager of a Federal establishment to name some regular employee fairly high in the organization to act as Coordinator for employment of the physically handicapped. He operates as a middleman between the handicapped applicant and the possible job. He has the responsibility of knowing what jobs in the installation may be performed efficiently by persons with certain kinds of handicaps. He must convince supervisors of the merits of hiring the handicapped and must see to it that a handicapped applicant who is among the best qualified for a job really gets full and fair consideration.

He also works with others in the community, in other Government agencies, industry, and organizations for the handicapped. If he is unable to place in his own agency a handicapped applicant who has successfully qualified under tough Civil Service standards, the Coordinator is often able to arrange a suitable placement with some other employer. But his chief function is to overcome prejudice and ignorance and fear in his own agency and personally to do all that is necessary to match the man and the job.

The Coordinator program has been a successful one; in 1957 when it began, only 6 out of every 1,000 persons hired by the Government were handicapped. By 1961, when there were 2,500 Coordinators (in addition to the

35,000 postmasters who were also designated as Coordinators) the proportion had risen to 15 handicapped out of every 1,000 appointed. Shortly thereafter, with 3,500 Coordinators appointed, the handicapped rose to more than 19 of every 1,000 appointed, thus more than tripling the 1957 percentage. The record is still improving.

In 1962, Congress made another important advance. It enacted a law authorizing Federal agencies to hire readers for blind employees, at no cost to the Government. The readers may be paid by the blind employees, or by persons or organizations outside the Government. Thus some obstacles were removed that previously restricted equal employment for the blind.

The problem of overcoming the skepticism of employers as to what the handicapped can really do on the job is a continuing one. Many employers are reluctant to take a chance on the handicapped applicant who comes to them as a complete stranger. In order to help meet this problem, the Civil Service Commission authorized Federal agencies to employ handicapped persons on a seven-hundred-hour temporary trial basis. If the employee fails to make the grade, he can be separated after completing his trial period; if, on the other hand, he proves to be an effective employee and meets the competitive standards, he may be kept under a more permanent type of appointment.

Still another significant milestone was to focus attention on the desirability of retaining employees who might otherwise retire on disability. At the direction of the President, the Commission asked all Federal managers and all Coordinators to interview each employee who came up for disability retirement from the job he held and to offer him, if possible, a less strenuous job he could still perform, and thus retain his valuable experience in Government and enable him to continue to lead a productive life as opposed to a protected one.

More and more we are inducing Federal employers to engage in job engineering--more appropriately, job swapping between employees to place the handicapped worker in a job more suited to his abilities.

The Federal Government is the nation's largest employer. Its work force numbers about 2.5 million civilian employees--more than the combined payroll of the 12 largest corporations in the United States. It is our sincere desire to make the Federal Service a showcase of progress in the gainful employment of the handicapped. We hope to show the nation how much can be done when the will to do is strong. The quality of placements made is of greater importance than sheer numbers. Our goal for the Federal Service is therefore good placements, placements that will be long-run successes. We stress especially careful matching of persons with jobs, so that each appointee will perform with credit to himself and with satisfaction to his employer. Applicants with physical impairments are expected to perform the duties of the jobs they seek with the same degree of efficiency as unimpaired applicants.

We intend to post a record of good placements in Government that will help break down prejudice and improve opportunities for the handicapped everywhere.

We in Government are mindful that as an employer we are but one employer. We know well that ultimate success in employment of the handicapped is a national concern which cries out for the attention and action of all employers, and citizens.

I do not believe that we realize how well we compare with other Nations in this respect. . . . I had the opportunity this summer, on a trip to Scandinavia, to observe what Norway, Sweden, and Denmark were doing about the employment of the physically handicapped by the Government. The fact is that, with rare exceptions, Government did not hire such people. The standards for most positions required a degree of physical perfection without any real connection with the abilities which were basically essential to safe and satisfactory performance.

Most of the Government officials in Scandinavia with whom I discussed this problem were unhappy about it. In that connection, I recall my Stockholm visit with a key member of Sweden's National Labor Market Board. He pulled from his desk a copy of the address that Chairman Macy had made in May of last year at the annual national meeting of the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped. He was especially interested in that portion of the address which spoke of making the Federal Service a showcase of progress in the gainful employment of these people. He was greatly impressed by the positive action taken in the United States in connection with the employment of the handicapped in the Federal Service.

I was sorry that I did not have with me in Stockholm more examples of what the handicapped, the blind for instance, are doing in our Federal Service. I could have cited the case of Mary Baron, a blind secretary in the Federal Aviation Agency, who takes dictation with a machine that makes a Braille tape. The agency reports: "Mrs. Baron's keen sense of humor, wholesome outlook on life, and competence have dispelled any thought that a handicapped person would be a burden rather than an asset."

Or I could have told him about Alvin Saile, who can read typed material with magnification for short periods only but who nevertheless earned both Bachelor's and Master's Degrees, passed the very difficult Federal-Service Entrance Examination and Labor Economist Examination, and is now an Economist in the Bureau of Employment Security, Department of Labor.

Then again there is Thelma Quesenberry, a telephone switchboard operator in the Department of Commerce, who had only partial vision since childhood and has been totally blind since 1955. This is a particularly interesting case in that it is a "first" -- the first blind switchboard operator employed by the Federal Government under Civil Service. Although the Civil Service Commission approved the employment of blind switchboard operators more than five years ago, none was appointed until early last year. There will undoubtedly be many more appointments as more people learn to use the special switchboards.

Then finally there is David Krause, totally blind since the age of five, who is Assistant to the Administrative Officer of a Department of the District

of Columbia Government. Mr. Krause wrote an article a few years ago for the Braille Monitor in praise of the Government's Coordinator Program. Although eligible for appointment at Grade 7 through the Federal-Service Entrance Examination, and at Grade 9 through the Information Specialist Examination, he made the difficult decision to accept a Grade 3 Clerk-Typist job in order to "get his foot in the door." After two days on the job, he was given a chance to try his hand at writing regulations, and just six months later he was made Regulations Analyst at Grade 7.

It may be well to recapitulate the cardinal elements of the Commission's basic policy with respect to hiring the handicapped for the Federal Service.

- (1) Establishing the firm principle of equality of employment opportunity.
- (2) Not merely allowing such equal opportunity but insisting upon it.
- (3) Making positive efforts to encourage those who seek Federal employment to compete under adverse circumstances.
- (4) Making certain that the handicapped not only have equality in competition, but also receive equal consideration when eligible for appointment, and get equal treatment after they are employed.
- (5) Requiring the employed handicapped to perform their duties with the same degree of efficiency as other employees.
- (6) Making the Federal Service a showcase of progress in the gainful employment of the handicapped.

It must be obvious that equal employment opportunity for the handicapped in no way damages or violates the Merit System. Preference is not given to any special group. No one is appointed to a Civil Service position who is not among the best qualified for that position. What is being done strengthens the Merit System, indeed, helps to perfect it -- helps to fulfill the most fundamental and basic of all of the principles laid down by the Civil Service Act of 1883 -- the principle of equality of employment opportunity.

# A SURVEY OF OCCUPATIONS WITH OPPORTUNITIES FOR BLIND PERSONS

by  
Dr. Douglas C. MacFarland

Some of the things I am going to say to you this morning may be a little bit elementary, but I think they are rather important to the entire process and may be of more interest to the Civil Service Coordinators than to the Counselors. If it does sound elementary, I hope you will forgive me and that we will be able to get down to more basics when we discuss this in Group Sessions.

Today, there are over thirty thousand identifiable occupations. We are certain that blind persons will, or can, perform on a competitive basis in a great majority of the jobs within these specific occupations. Conservative estimates indicate that there are over forty thousand blind persons now employed in a wide range of jobs. They're working in manufacturing, clerical and sales, the professions--such as lawyers, teachers, chemists, program-mists, physicists, judges, psychologists, business executives, and others.

Many jobs in the service occupations, as well as in agriculture, both farming and non-farming, are successfully filled by persons without sight. This doesn't mean that blindness is no longer a severe disability. When the loss of sight occurs, it necessitates a radical readjustment on the part of the individual; however, with expert counseling assistance, medical services, adjustment training, and pre-vocational and vocational training, blind persons are daily being placed on jobs in accordance with their interests, aptitudes, and capacities.

In the State-Federal Rehabilitation Program, the Counselors are especially equipped to provide the particular guidance required and to arrange those services necessary in each individual instance.

When a blind person is referred for Vocational Rehabilitation, a thorough and complete diagnosis, both medical and vocational, is made. Based on the diagnostic results obtained, the specific Vocational Rehabilitation services are planned. If it's possible to remove or reduce the disability, the first order of business is the arrangement for physical restoration. This might include hospitalization, surgery, medical treatment, prosthetic appliances, convalescent care, and so forth. In most instances with blind applicants, it's not possible to remove the disability; therefore, vocational planning is followed. This may include one or all of a variety of services: it might be a long-term college training program, training in trade and technical schools, on-the-job experience, or perhaps tutorial instruction.

Following training, a careful plan for selective placement is essential to the rehabilitation of each client. Matching the blind person to a job, the Counselor must be sure of the client's ability to travel independently, communicate and relate to his fellow workers, and to produce on an equal basis with his colleagues.

Just to place the individual in the job situation is not the end as far as we are concerned. The State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies must assume

the responsibility for providing consultative assistance to both the employer and the employee, when and if particular problems should arise. . . . in other words, to be there in case there is difficulty. In short, it is not the aim of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program to inflict upon employers additional problems resulting from a blind worker. Instead, Counselors are trained to work toward meeting the employer's work needs, as well as assisting the client in fulfilling his vocational objectives.

Less than 50 years ago, blind persons had little choice in selecting a vocation. With rare exceptions, they were limited to occupations such as piano tuner, broom maker, and some of the other prosaic things that all of you are all only too familiar with. A few completed college, but because so many professional fields were closed they joined the various aspects of work for the blind. In the late 30's, during the Second World War, and up to our present day, we have noted a striking reversal of this situation. Trained and qualified blind persons are now found in almost every occupational area, ranging from the professions to the unskilled dishwasher and porter. In between, there are thousands of examples of persons who are blind and who are carrying on daily in competitive employment as typists, switchboard operators, machinists, dark room technicians, assemblers, farmers, businessmen and women and, in short, in business of every category and nature.

During the Second World War, as well as the years immediately following, a great number of blind persons were working in the competitive labor market or in manufacturing and industrial jobs. During the past few years, we have observed a rather noticeable switch to the professions, clerical and sales, and service occupations.

Well adjusted, carefully trained, and selectively placed blind workers are daily proving their ability to compete in widely divergent fields of job opportunities. With the coming of automation, jobs previously demanding sighted workers can now easily be performed by blind individuals.

Rapidly expanding employment opportunities are being realized in the industries, service and professional fields. With initial support from a Vocational Rehabilitation Agency, the able blind person of this decade can be gainfully and profitably employed with little or no limiting factors on job choice. The effectiveness of the State Vocational Rehabilitation Program, however, is dependent upon a coordinated approach involving the Federal Government, the State Government, community rehabilitation facilities, and community understanding. The Federal Government has demonstrated its awareness of the needs of the potential rehabilitant by significant increases in allocation of Federal funds to the State Rehabilitation Agencies, and the provision of research and demonstration grants to public and non-profit organizations. We have literally spent millions of dollars in this effort in the past decade. We are coming more and more to recognize the need for vocational training for those blind persons entering the competitive labor market. This is true not only for the technical types of work, but it is also essential for blind persons in even the unskilled service occupations. While a sighted person might accept a job as an automatic dishwashing machine operator and be able to pick the training up while on the job, we believe that in order to give our clients the plus factors necessary to keep up competitively, they will require vocational training before placement. This means we must gear our plans for vocational training not only

for the present highly competitive labor market, but for the future when training will become even more important.

In order to obtain some idea of the present employment picture of blind workers, it may be well first to take a quick look at the closures, nationwide, in competitive employment for 1963. Of a total of 3,169 closures, the breakdown is as follows:

Professional	315
Semi-professional, office and managerial positions	536
Clerical and sales occupations	556
Service occupations	538
Agriculture, fisheries, forestry and kindred occupations	344
Skilled	327
Semi-skilled	319
Unskilled occupations	234.

I think this becomes particularly significant when compared with the large numbers of semi-skilled and unskilled workers placed in industry in the first decade after the passage of Public Law #113 in 1943.

As we plan for future employment of our clients, we should keep certain factors in mind if we are to obtain a fair share of the future labor market. The United States Bureau of Employment Security estimates that the fastest growing occupations during the next decade will be the professional and technical positions and the clerical and sales occupations. Among the manual occupations, only the most skilled groups--craftsmen, foremen, and kindred workers--will expand at a rate at least as great as total employment. The number of semi-skilled jobs is projected to increase at two-thirds the rate of total employment, and the number of unskilled jobs will remain about the same.

In 1960, the service occupations stood in fourth rank among employment, providing jobs for more than six and one-half million people. These millions were working in such diverse places as auto and other kinds of repair shops, laundry-dry cleaning establishments, theatres, and a host of others. The service industry group has also been one of the fastest growing and is now well over three times its size in 1919. This reflects a very important fact in our way of life: that as we grow and prosper, greater proportions of people will be engaged, not in making things, but in performing the multitude of services that make life more pleasant and easier for people generally.

There is little point in enumerating specific jobs that blind persons are holding successfully in the service area; suffice it to say that we have hardly scratched the surface and that this area of employment will provide tremendous opportunities in the future if we're prepared to train our clients accordingly.

One cannot leave the area of service occupations without at least a brief mention of our vending stand program--which during the past year had a gross volume of sales of approximately fifty-four million dollars and provided average earnings well above four thousand dollars to nearly three thousand blind workers. Lest one be given the impression that this is mainly a captured market, we should like to point out that two-thirds of the vending stands now in operation are in other than Federal property, proving that blind persons can indeed compete in

this highly competitive field of concessions. These opportunities will not be affected adversely with the coming of automation. In the opinion of many of the experts, the employment of blind persons in this area alone will double within the next five to ten years, and this is as a direct result of automation.

Another fast-growing occupational area--which offers a number of job opportunities for blind individuals--is the health and related work area. Throughout the country, hospitals are faced with a shortage of labor in such areas as automatic dishwashing machine operators, dish strippers, glass and silver machine operators, pots and pans men, meat breaders, salad girls, etc. Blind persons can, if properly trained, perform on any one or a combination of these jobs. With intensive training, the blind person in the lower than average intelligence scale can become competitive. Another job that is open to blind persons is in the central supply where such tasks as assembling the various types of trays for different medical procedures can be performed without sight. In a great number of hospitals, the sharpening of hypodermic needles no longer exists; this is because of the manufacture of the low-cost disposable needle; however, there continues to be a number of these jobs still in existence and while we know that eventually they will disappear, it still may be an excellent spot to put someone in to gain experience for transition into other jobs where sight is not a factor. Speaking of employment within a hospital, one must consider the job of darkroom technician who is now faced with the necessity of learning to operate automatic film processing equipment. The skills involved in this operation are a little different than those he has been using in hand film development, and the new blind person entering into this employment must not only know the operation of the machine, but in order to keep abreast will need to have training in its maintenance and, very probably, in related operations around the hospital.

As part of our continuing effort in VRA to support placement activities and new ideas for employment, we're planning to hold a short-term training course toward the end of this fiscal year, specifically designed to discuss and to explore possibilities for employment in the hospital area. Of course, the Civil Service has analyzed innumerable jobs in the unskilled categories that are possible opportunities for blind persons. I think there would be little point in my reciting for you here today a long list of these, but I thought you might be interested in a few examples of individual employment in the Washington area under Federal Civil Service. I don't think these are unique; they are being duplicated around the country, but I thought they would be interesting to some of our Counselors:

one person is a chemist for the Federal Drug Administration.....  
another is a programmer for the State Department.....another, a medical records transcriber for the Bureau of Hearings and Appeals in Social Security.....an attorney for the Foreign Claims Settlements Department.....a medical records transcriber for the Naval Hospital at Bethesda, Maryland.....  
another person operates a 555 cord board for the Bureau of Indian Affairs.....  
we have a switchboard operator again, but here on an automatic console; she's working for the Interior Department.....a dictaphone typist for the Justice Department.....a Junior Economist for the Treasury Department.....and a Labor Statistician--and this Mr. Baer mentioned--working with the Employment Security in the Labor Department.

These are jobs within the past year. I suppose we could have developed for you a long list of the jobs that persons have become competitive in the Civil Service in the Washington area, but I frankly see no need for this. There's danger sometimes in compiling a list, either short or long, because Counselors and Coordinators have a tendency to look down the list and try to match a client to one particular job on that list instead of assessing his potentials and finding the employment most suitable to him.

# PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES ESSENTIAL TO THE REHABILITATION OF BLIND PERSONS

by  
Dr. Norman M. Yoder

I would say that over the years we have been a group of people trying to sell to the sighted world the competency of blind persons and I would, for a few minutes, like to have you think in terms of a production line in industry. It takes a piece or a series of pieces of raw material and, after going through various and sundry processes, places on the market an item which, if it is properly packaged and useful to a customer, can be sold by a group of salesmen. Now please bear this in mind for a few moments and look at it as far as the rehabilitation process is concerned, as it relates to blind and visually impaired persons.

Twenty years ago, at the end of World War II, we who got into the business at that time were happy if we found a blind person who, by his own efforts and abilities, was able to contact the agency, seem to be able to breathe and was sufficiently warm to sit upright, and place him in war industry.

Little concern was given to his personal attitudes toward blindness; little concern was expressed relative to his real skills, his real employment potentials and, above all, we were only concerned with his ability to get to and from the job--whether that was by the use of a cane, whether somebody took him, and whether he took a taxicab or used a guide dog. We weren't too concerned about his own responsibilities in the community; we weren't too concerned about many things that involved the total individual, and this was fairly true until the influx of military personnel came back to these shores and began to flood the labor market. The blind person who sat at a single operation was no longer needed. Industry was going through a tremendous shift; industry was gearing for peacetime production. Many of the individuals whom we had placed during that period were back in the open labor market seeking an opportunity.

The rehabilitation Counselor had to take a look at what he had done because, frequently, he had damaged this piece of raw material by improper evaluation, testing or lack of testing, so during the early part of the 50's and through the middle part of the 50's rehabilitation processing, as far as blind people were concerned, came to recognize that the labor market was undergoing a tremendous change. They came to realize that if we were going to process raw material, if we were going to package it in such a way that it was acceptable to a new customer demand, we had to do a lot of re-engineering in the plant and, as a result, we became cognizant of the use of and the value of rehabilitation centers in which we tried to reframe the attitudes of the blind person toward the disability, toward the sighted world in which he was going to have to compete.

We stressed the importance of personal management, not only insofar as mobility is concerned, but insofar as living with and associating with his sighted friends. I can recall in the early days of placement -- back in Columbus, Ohio -- I placed a boy on a job: he was a tremendous assembler, with excellent manual dexterity, and one of the high producers on the line; he was

fired ultimately because his colleagues couldn't associate with him, and the reason they couldn't associate with him was that somewhere along the line he hadn't made the acquaintance of soap and water. Now today this cannot occur; we're extremely desirous of having our product a competitive unit of labor with the sighted world and the sighted competition we must meet.

In the rehabilitation centers, we're spending some time on not only the mobility but on the art of eating, the art of dressing, personal grooming; we're interested in testing the individual's skills so that he can be trained and placed at his maximum skill level.

Carrying it on through from the late or the middle 50's to the present time, in the caseloads in the agency with which I have been associated, we found that there has been a gradual shift from about 5 per cent of the total active caseload in advanced training beyond the high school level to over 20 per cent at the present time. In my judgment, this will increase to roughly 50 per cent in the next several years.

This is simply an effort to meet the existing demand of present day employment. As Dr. MacFarland has pointed out, the trend now is to professional, technical, and semi-skilled jobs, no longer the unskilled kind of employment.

Today we recognize that the preparation of a blind person for employment can no longer be three to five years behind the employment market and I think this has been the tragedy of the history of rehabilitation of the blind and, as a state administrator, we are guilty. We have not been concerned with the changing trends soon enough to have the product ready upon customer demand. The demand has been there and we have trailed that demand to the point that more blind people have not fallen into the proper slots as the scene shifts. It is important for each agency serving the blind to have engineers out in the field, meeting with business people, meeting with governmental employment agents and agencies, to know what the demands are in advance of their going on the market, in order that we can plan the training of blind persons to meet this kind of competition.

Dr. MacFarland touched slightly on computer programming. I think this is an advance in the area of automation and science that 5 to 10 years ago we knew very little about and probably would not have considered it. Certainly there are many areas of science that 5 to 10 to 15 years ago we would not have undertaken simply because we had too little knowledge, willingness to gamble and willingness to experiment. If we are going to stay abreast of the market needs we are going to have to do experimental work just as industry does in readjusting and revamping its product to meet customer demand.

Everytime that we run into a blind person who has a new idea concerning employment and the Counselor has refused to go along with a training program because it is impractical, due to visual impairment or blindness, we find that some rascal has just gone out and done it!

So that if the philosophy of rehabilitation is to exist into the future, it is going to have to approach it with an open mind, it's not going to do any good

for the boss to sit on the purse strings and say we can't experiment because it costs too much money.

We're gambling, at the present time, with eleven totally blind persons in Computer Programming Training. It's a gamble because we're not quite sure--weren't quite sure at the outset--how industry was going to react. Interestingly, one of the large users of computer systems, United States Steel, told us that under no circumstances would they ever consider a blind persons in their computer systems organization; however, they have a great deal of overflow work from their own unit sent to an organization in Pittsburgh known as Computer Oriented Research Engineering. . . . and they might well be shocked to find that two totally blind persons have been doing their work for the last year, and doing it successfully!

Wierton Steel had the same experience; however, now they have taken on a blind person in their organization. We believe that this and other fields can well open new doors and new occupational opportunities for the blind.

Twenty years ago we who were in the Rehabilitation field were salesmen: we tried to sell to management the concept of hiring persons without sight, not to find jobs for the blind, but to find jobs that could be done without sight. Today in the shifting demand of the labor market, the Rehabilitation Counselor is still a salesman, but he must also be a Public Relations man because at the professional and technical skill level he cannot go in and sell: he can only open the doors and his product, the blind person, must be so well finished and when that door is opened and the blind person steps through, he himself can carry the interview to success, with the Counselor in the background to supply any of the necessary tooling to do the job, such as the reader service question, braille of regulations, and whatever may be required.

This, then, is the shifting emphasis from raw material that was poorly machined in the late 40's and 50's to a product now that is well machined, well packaged, and ready to fit into the employment picture of today.

## A LOOK AT PRESENT AND FUTURE PERSONNEL NEEDS IN GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

by  
Samuel M. Ehrenhalt

I am pleased to be here to talk to this group. Drs. MacFarland and Yoder have already raised issues that are of great concern to those of us in the manpower field and in Government.

Economists have begun to speak up in the manpower field, particularly because of some of the salient changes that are occurring in the American economy.

If you look at the overall picture, last year for the first time the United States had an employment total of 70 million. The latest figures that are available in some detail give us encouraging news: employment of non-farm wage and salary workers on industry and Government payrolls reached a new high of 59.2 million in August, about 1.6 million higher than a year ago.

The number of jobs are increasing in the United States at a good pace because this 1.6 million rise over the year was achieved in the face of very rapid technological change. We more than made up for job losses arising from automation and other technological developments. We absorbed all of the increase in the labor force that took place; we absorbed the decline in the farm sector--which amounted to some 1/4 million jobs last year; and we absorbed about 200 thousand of the unemployed of a year ago. So this is an economy which is growing, is growing rapidly, and gives every prospect of long-term growth; it is one in which there are job opportunities.

Underlying these comforting statistics, however, are other changes taking place that pose significant challenges; these set the framework within which the placement and employment opportunities for the handicapped and the blind can and need to be considered.

First, this is going to be a decade of unprecedented growth in the labor force. Between 1960 and 1970, some 26 million young workers are going to be entering the labor force. This unprecedented growth, both in absolute or relative terms, by itself, without any other changes, would impose tremendous problems in terms of achieving the objective of having these 26 million young workers trained to make the kind of career choices that will meet the needs of the economy. To get an idea of what this means: in the 1950's in contrast to this 26 million, we had 19 million young workers entering the labor force; we are now faced with a labor-force-growth of young persons that is about 45 per cent higher than in the previous decade.

A second factor, below the surface of the comforting statistics, are the kinds of changes to which we have already alluded. It is very significant if you note the pattern of this 1.6 million growth in the labor force of last year. A million of it occurred in three segments of our economy: (1) in wholesale and retail trade; (2) in the service industries; and (3) in state and

local governments. About 330 thousand jobs occurred in manufacturing and this marks the first time, incidentally, that manufacturing has reached its 1953 level of about 17-1/2 million workers; the other significant increase was in contract construction--which moved up about 100 thousand over the past year.

If you look at somewhat longer run changes, you get very much the same picture, e. g. if we take the figures for the first six months of 1964 and compare them to the first six months of 1957, for the seven year period you have these kinds of changes: (1) wholesale and retail trade up about 1-1/4 million in employment; (2) finance, insurance and real estate, up about 1/2 million; (3) service industries--which run the gamut from hotels, barber shops, beauty parlors, medical services, non-profit organizations, and engineering services--up about 1-3/4 million; and (4) state and local governments, up over 2 million, reflecting higher educational requirements and higher enrollment, as well as expansion of other state and local government services which come with population growth and with the demand for additional health and welfare services. So these four factors of the economy: trade, finance, services, and state and local governments, account for about 5-1/2 million increased jobs over the past seven years.

On the other hand, goods producing industries--that aggregate of industries which include manufacturing, contract construction, mining, and agriculture--have declined during this period and have declined more significantly as a proportion of total job opportunities, and this is one of the significant aspects of the manpower revolution with which I began. Looking back to 1947, right after the war, these goods producing industries accounted for about 51 per cent of total employment. In 1957 this had declined to 46 per cent and in 1963 to 40 per cent. This then is, in three milestones, the shape of our manpower revolution.

The other aspect of this is, as a result of these industry changes, that there have been very profound effects on occupations. Because these industries have different occupational composition, we have had an acceleration of the long-term increase in the proportion of the professional and white-collar occupations, both absolutely and as a proportion of the total, and at the expense of manual occupations. This trend occurs even in the manufacturing industries. The non-production workers in manufacturing industries have increased from about one-sixth of total manufacturing employment right after the war to a little over one-quarter of it now. So whatever growth there has been in manufacturing has been in the non-production worker activities--which tend to be largely white-collar activities.

There are very similar patterns in the Federal agencies. Federal employment is subject to somewhat different determinations than private activities and is much more difficult to forecast. The number of Federal workers is determined by the conditions of domestic government programs and international responsibilities as defined by Congress. Apart from this, very much the same patterns are to be discerned in the Federal service. In appraising the opportunities for handicapped and blind workers in the Federal agencies, I think there are three significant things that should be noted.

First, overall trends in Federal employment. Federal employment has remained almost stable in recent years. During the Korean War and between 1949 and 1955, Federal employment increased on the order of 20 per cent. During the past four or five years Federal employment has increased by about 100 thousand; however, for the last year or so, the number remained relatively stable at 2.3 million. The outlook does not suggest very much change in this area. All of the major increases in Government employment that you see in the data of the Bureau of Labor Statistics have been almost entirely in the state and local government sector in recent years. Federal employment has not increased very much at all in recent years and the outlook, particularly with some of the budget developments that are occurring or that have occurred during the last year or so in the defense and other sectors, calls for a fairly stable situation as far as we can see ahead.

The composition of Federal employment, however, has been undergoing changes very similar to those we see in the private economy. Government operations have become increasingly complex and, as a result, the Federal services have been recruiting more and more highly specialized people and few with only general or limited skills. Let me just cover a few significant and, perhaps, symbolic occupations.

A study of the Civil Service Commission several years ago showed that if you looked at the clerical occupations in the first four grades of the Civil Service, i.e. Grades 1 through 4, we had at that time (about 1962), 28 thousand general clerical employees in these grades; at the same time, the Federal agencies employed more than that number in the physical science occupations and about four times as many in engineering occupations. This is symbolic of the kind of change that has been taking place in the Federal service. The typist also comes readily to mind: in 1947 the Federal Government employed about 85 thousand typists; since that time, Federal employment has increased about 25 per cent. If the demand for typists had increased accordingly, the Federal Government would have well over 100 thousand typists today; the actual figure is 78 thousand. . . . a decline of 8 per cent since 1947, or 26 per cent less than might have been expected based on general trends in Federal employment. This reflects the introduction into many Government offices of quick-copy-equipment which has substantially reduced the demand for persons whose skills do not extend beyond the ability to type.

Going to an area which shows another of the significant trends in Federal service: in 1947 the Federal Government employed about 14 thousand workers in the operation of bookkeeping machines, calculating machines, and punchcard-sorting-tabulating machines. Today they have increased to some 22 thousand, an increase of over 50 per cent and a new dimension has been added: the computer. In 1957 there were almost no employees engaged in computer operations because computers, as we know them today, did not exist. This represents another facet of our changing economy: new equipment begins to sire new occupations. If you look at the back pages of the financial section of the Sunday Times and read through some of the occupations which are advertised there, you will find yourself stumbling over many new words, like Miniaturization Engineer, and other such new job titles.

Since the first computer was introduced in 1951, the Federal Government has become the nation's prime user of automatic data processing equipment, and today there are over 10 thousand computer employees and many of the 22 thousand machine operating employees mentioned before work directly in support of the Government's automatic data processing and computing systems. This accounts, in part, for this 50 per cent increase in machine occupations.

The computer has influenced other occupations, too. New occupations have emerged, such as operations research on which some nearly 5 hundred Federal employees are now engaged. The computer has contributed to the reduction in the Government's need for sub-professional mathematical and statistical employees. Today there are in the Federal Government as a whole, under 10 thousand sub-professionals in these fields--which is a drop of nearly one-third since the first computer was installed 13 years ago. On the other hand, the number of professional mathematicians has doubled since 1951 to a total of about 2,500 and professional statisticians have increased well over 10 per cent to about 2,500 or 3,000. The one illustration that comes to mind of a specific change of this sort is in one of the operations of programming that I am concerned with in the Bureau of Labor Statistics. About six years ago, we had well over 60 clerks engaged; this work has now been put on a machine and our staff on this operation has been reduced to 12 clerks. . . . notable then are not only the reductions but a very sharp change of skill content, a very commonplace development with the introduction of equipment and as Government and industry needs change.

In science and engineering, the changes in the Federal service have been quite dramatic. Today the Federal Government employs nearly 35 thousand in the physical sciences--which is an increase of about one-fifth over the last seven years. The number of persons in the specialty of physics is up 60 per cent in the last seven years and up 30 per cent in chemistry. In the biological sciences, the Federal Government employs about 37 thousand, again an increase of 30 per cent since 1957. In engineering, the changes have been even greater. Today the number in the engineering occupations is very close to 120 thousand, a two-third's increase over the past seven years. The increases in these professional fields, which parallel the experience in industry, have also brought with them increases in supporting functions. There are today as many technicians in the Federal Government as typists, both have 78 thousand. Advancing technology and the changing needs in the Federal service, as in industry, can cause very sharp changes in the composition of the work force and particularly so in science and engineering and other technical occupations.

The changing nature of Government services also affect the work force. There are more air traffic controllers, social security claims examiners, accounting and budget workers, post office city carriers, and specialists in business and industry. Congress has passed new laws in recent years, many of which have provided new or expanded services, so that today we have more food and drug inspectors, highway engineers, and persons employed in the fields of education. There are more laws to interpret, administer, and enforce, so the regulatory agencies have an expansion of workloads and legal and kindred occupations in the Government have increased nearly 30 per cent since 1957 to a total of over 38 thousand.

With the increase in medical research and public health service programs, reflecting partly the fact that our war veterans are growing older and more in need of Government medical assistance, the number of medical officers, primarily in the Veterans Administration and the Public Health Service, has increased by 15 per cent in the past seven years to something over 11 thousand. This is all within the context of the relative stability during this period. The number of Federal employees per 1,000 population has declined roughly from 14 to 13 since 1956.

Another change parallel to industry change is the relationship of white-collar to blue-collar employment; very much the same thing is happening in the Federal service as elsewhere in this respect. Since 1951, the number of Federal employees in white collar occupations--excluding jobs which are found in post offices--has increased 28 per cent from 900 thousand in 1951 to 1.1 million in 1962. Blue-collar workers on the other hand have declined about one-fifth from 830 thousand to 680 thousand.

As in the rest of the economy, there's been a sharp shift in the composition of the work force and very much in the same direction. Again, sharing this with the private economy as a whole, these trends, from all that we can tell, are likely to continue. This then is the second factor influencing the prospects for jobs in the Federal service.

The third factor is that within the overall stability of Federal employment, a great many jobs, literally thousands of jobs, open up every year and this is because Federal employees, like others, retire and die, leave the labor force, or leave Federal service for other employment. This is what is called the replacement need. The replacement need in the Federal service runs on the order of 300 thousand a year. Here then are three hundred thousand new workers which need to be hired by the Federal Government year in and year out, not for new functions necessarily but simply to replace workers who, for one reason or another, leave Federal employment. In addition to that, there are many tens of thousands of jobs that can become open and can be filled from outside the Federal establishment as Federal workers shift from one agency to another and must be replaced. So this offers good opportunities for jobs in Federal agencies.

Let me summarize by suggesting one or two things, by way of guidelines, that seem to be implicit in the kinds of trends, both in the economy as a whole and the Federal Government, which I have described to you. What is taking place in the Federal agencies is placing an increased premium on the ability of the worker to make changes in occupations, in job content, and to adapt to new situations. This obviously has implications for the guidance and counseling and training of handicapped workers, and expanding their capacity to acquire new skills and to adapt well. This is a quality that handicapped workers have in common with all others and, perhaps, here they may have an advantage to the extent that they have had training as adults and may be especially suited, perhaps, to readaptation in contrast to other workers. The Government has had experience in some of these things: the Armour case is one where workers have had great difficulty because of some basic lacks and rigidities, including inadequate training when they were youngsters and were unable to take advantage of retraining opportunities.

The studies of the Human Resources Foundation on the experiences of groups of handicapped workers in learning to operate very complex machines suggest certainly no insurmountable obstacles to their efficient retraining as changes occur in the economy.

Secondly, the trends we have been discussing this morning may suggest some modification in vocational rehabilitation programs to the extent that they are focused on training workers for routine tasks. In view of the trends toward the broad-gaged specialist--which is emerging both in private economy and in Government--this suggests the need for increased efforts to enlarge the skills of the handicapped and to focus on hitherto untapped or underutilized aptitudes.

Finally, the changes that we have traced are increasing the number of jobs which can be filled by careful, responsible workers, handicapped or not. Here again there may be some advantages that well-trained, carefully-placed handicapped workers have: as indicated by a number of studies which have shown their more responsible attitudes in terms of absenteeism, higher motivation and few accidents. This perhaps is the final message for handicapped workers and for those concerned with their placement. It is important that all workers obtain the very best education and training of which they are capable, and then they can set themselves up as competent, responsible workers.

There will be jobs in the economy, there will be jobs in the Federal service. The economy is growing; this, in itself, augers well for the possibility of productive use of handicapped workers. . . . it facilitates awareness and attention to their specialized problems. This is one of the real comforts that comes out of the comforting figures with which I began.

## GROUP I

### FUNDAMENTAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL BROAD CONCEPTS APPLYING TO FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT

by

Herbert R. Brown, Group Leader

Our Group was a good one and our thoughts were similar to those of some of the other Groups in that the value of discussion is one thing, but unless proper recommendations are implemented the Conference would bear no long range dividends.

First, our Group was concerned as to how people would learn what is done for the blind, how it is done, and how to make certain that blind people can work effectively on their jobs. This Conference helps to establish liaison with the Federal Coordinators on a broad base. We recommend regular face-to-face discussion regarding the actual job openings within the Federal facilities and installations and weighing the abilities of the potential candidates to fill these positions.

The needs of blind people vary sharply. They are dependent upon many things: the degree of visual acuity, the age at onset of blindness, and personality factors.

Secondly, we were concerned as to how our story can be brought to the attention of a maximum number of Federal Coordinators. We need to approach the proper Civil Service authorities to secure an invitation to the annual Conference of the Federal Personnel Associations from New York and New Jersey to be held in May 1965 at Niagara Falls; our purpose in this approach is to seek an opportunity to make an overall presentation to the total group.

The next point was that we would like to arrange with the Personnel Directors, who are concerned, conferences as needed about the placement of blind people whose problems seem to pose special difficulties. Coordinators may have sincere and logical concern as to how the abilities of some blind persons can be used effectively within their agencies. For one thing, our workers would be glad to take Coordinators to see a blind person on the job and who is doing work similar to that being considered by Civil Service; then when you are ready to proceed, a Counselor will be glad to put a worker on the job and see to it that he does his work and does it well! Because one blind person can hold a particular job, it does not mean that another can also do the work. Sometimes it may take a blind person a little longer to master the procedures required on the job; therefore Counselors should be skilled and knowledgeable about what constitutes a job, what is required on the job, and what may need to be done to assist a blind person to offset the effects of his disability. A well-adjusted and trained blind worker is not going to add to your cost: he's going to give you the same profit, same productivity for your square footage as a sighted person, but he may need some tools and equipment to help him do well and our rehabilitation service can provide these.

Next we need to get to know your problems and the best place to learn

about them is to have our rehabilitation Counselors visit your facilities. The number of blind people in New York State who are now being processed in vocational rehabilitation are currently about 2,000 of whom 450 are being placed on jobs each year. As you will see, this is not so many people although New York State has one of the largest rehabilitation programs for the blind in the country.

It isn't easy to be blind and work, but those who work ask no quarters of anyone and they do an excellent job! The philosophy of the agency for the blind is not such that we run around just looking for jobs; instead we look for a specific job when there is a person who is adequately trained and ready to go to work. Sometimes there aren't any trained persons seeking employment in a given locality for many months; it may then occur that there are a half dozen ready to go to work at the same time. Our Counselors would then want to come and look over your facilities to determine whether or not there is something there that a blind person can do.

Although we are not asking for exceptions, we hope you will remember when we place an individual with you, he is still an individual with strengths and weaknesses common to all of us. Since we know a great deal about our clients, would you please keep us advised until a worker is thoroughly set on his job. Our purpose here is to save the job and to spare you, the employer, any unnecessary anxiety or inconvenience.

The next point which our Group felt hadn't been stressed enough is the value of having trial periods for disabled workers in the Federal structure. There seems to be a tendency to feel that the trial period is a place where you fit in some questionable people. These trial periods should have the purpose of giving qualified potential employees the opportunity of demonstrating their fitness for the job and serve as a supportive measure for both the employer and the employee. There are two kinds of Civil Service trial periods: (a) the 30-day emergency appointment--which can be made without an examination; and (b) the seven-hundred-hour appointment which is made on the basis of an examination only--here this is an advantage because even though the applicant has passed an examination, seven hundred hours gives sufficient time for him to make adjustments on the job and for the rehabilitation agency to work out any minor difficulties which may arise. It is understandable that an employer might be hesitant to hire a blind worker outright in some situations; however, the seven-hundred-hour trial period gives the employer sufficient time to study the matter and observe the worker before making a final decision.

The next point is our state vocational rehabilitation services available to the Personnel Directors in the Federal installations. There are many services in rehabilitation which are available to you Personnel Directors, particularly if you have employees who have had a reduction in their visual acuity. You know that people more often lose their sight after the age of 45. Some require glasses or treatment for their eyes because this is where the human body quite often begins to break down first. Many people with eye defects have a great deal of ability and if one physical defect takes a capable worker out of the labor market, this represents an unnecessary loss to the worker and to the work force.

Sometimes there are emotional and other problems which accompany the loss of sight and a thorough evaluation is indicated. If you should call us in, in such an instance, for an interview and an evaluation, a complete diagnosis may bring recognition of true potentialities and possibilities which can be utilized in such a way that such an individual can continue to work. We are accustomed to giving advice and assistance where a person may require eye surgery or low-vision lenses, or where he, perhaps, has a medical condition which needs immediate attention--such as a hernia or a rapidly advancing diabetic situation.

Now let us consider a program of training and adjustment. When there has been a rapid, sharp drop in visual acuity, there are things that a person must learn to do in a different way. One of them is to slow down, and another is that he must learn not to rely constantly on others to do things which he should be able to do for himself. In many instances, after training, a blind person may be able to return to his former job; but this is not always possible. After he comes to you and discusses the problem and you find that you cannot allow him to continue to work on the job, by all means let us know in order that we may be able to work out an alternate plan for you.

The final point is that the rehabilitation staff must keep abreast of the Federal Civil Service announcements in order to encourage qualified blind persons to take the examinations. We are in favor of the examination process for our people to enter Civil Service employment.

You may also be concerned about the time when layoffs and cutbacks require a reduction in staff. Sometimes it is possible to transfer and reassign workers. When you reach the name of a handicapped person for consideration in reduction of staff, there is only one solution and that is to let him go, along with the others; a handicapped person has seniority just like anyone else, but he shouldn't receive any special preference. Blind people only want fair and honorable treatment all the way through from employment to discharge. Although one of the functions of the rehabilitation agency is to retrain blind workers who may become unemployed, it is always better to advise the rehabilitation agency as far in advance as possible when a reduction in staff is contemplated. Sometimes there are shortcuts which will save time and effort for everybody concerned.

Our Group also discussed the matter of the green tags being placed on applications of blind persons seeking Federal employment. Although these tags have been put on innocently and with the best of intentions, we would like to explore the subject further in order to learn if such tags are necessary. We all have a certain amount of inherent prejudice within us; it is then somewhat understandable when a Personnel Director sees an application with a green tag--which indicates the applicant is blind--that he may not even want to discuss the position with the applicant and may thereby pass up an opportunity of interviewing some remarkable people who have excellent abilities.

All that we want for blind people and all they are asking for themselves is a chance. It is hard enough to come up the ladder again if you are blind, and the opportunity to be considered for suitable employment is of the greatest importance.

## GROUP II

### PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES ESSENTIAL TO THE REHABILITATION OF BLIND PERSONS

by

Morton M. Kleinman, Group Leader

Although unstructured, the intent was to develop free interchange of ideas and to expose attitudes toward the employment of the blind. As a point of departure, the discussion was stimulated by questions as to the experiences any of the Federal representatives had with blind workers. Many factors were raised, including the issue of granting a trial experience, personality of the worker, relationship with colleagues, public attitudes toward the blind worker who looked peculiar with "heavy glasses and reading with his nose", competency and inventiveness of the blind person, and the use of ingenious and acceptable modifications of job duties.

The discussion centered about the two problems of worker and colleague orientation, and acceptance in the work force. It was the consensus of the Group that the primary relationship regarding the orientation lay between the Counselor and Coordinator and depending upon the attitude of the employing department that the Counselor be available for additional staff orientation as needed, especially to the direct supervisor. The Counselor has a direct responsibility in job orientation involving mobility instruction to the building, within the building (including work place, egress, entrance, eating and wash-room facilities), the actual set-up of the work area--be it the arrangement of materials for a typist or setting up varied files, resource materials, and appropriate equipment for the professional worker.

It was felt the employer had prime responsibility for assisting the blind worker in making out "within the group." Our Counselors are involved in employment counseling with clients in the area of having them accept their responsibility in recognizing their role in group acceptance. Both orientation and social acceptance were of prime importance if the client was to succeed. In order to assist in this process, the Counselor should be physically present as needed, especially in the beginning. In exploring attitudes further, we raised the question of the employer's conscious feeling of guilt and being considered "a bad guy" if he had to discharge a blind person for incompetency or other reasons for not being able to perform. Our general conclusions were that this had some reality aspect, but it would be helpful to have this related to the client by those most interested parties, namely the immediate superior, the Coordinator, and the Counselor. This would remove some of the ill feeling and might pave the way for another applicant being tried at the specific job and not leave the employer with any adverse feeling. We expressed the feeling that the client be given the opportunity to try out; this was a testing of the reality factors and would have experiential value for all the parties concerned. This would be equally true for non-handicapped persons and this would be a short-term-experience that would not be a permanent trauma to a blind person, nor have permanent adverse effects on the others involved.

At this juncture, we became involved in a discussion of individual differences and the explanation was given as to what legal blindness is by statute;

this was compared with the more adequate interpretation of what functional or on-the-job performance vision constitutes.

There was a discussion of some of the factors relating to the congenital versus the adventitious blind: motivation, psycho-social adjustment, individual needs, and training clients in the effective use of residual vision. There was a limited exchange of information concerning the types of low-vision aids (hand magnifiers, telescopes, microscopes, bi-focals) and how these related to greater flexibility, adaptability, and independence of the worker. It was conceded that any additional functional vision rendered by low-vision aids might make the critical difference in successful performance. The role of the low-vision specialist in the process of teaching the client to use his vision effectively was interpreted.

How can the vocational rehabilitation staff secure information as to employment opportunities within the Federal service? Do we approach each agency? What is the examination process? Are there real or unrealistic physical requirements? How do we or the client evaluate whether the job duties are appropriate?

Professional clients can best enter the classified service through the Federal Service Entrance Examination. We felt if there was any reasonable doubt the applicant should undertake the examination. Should he be placed on the certified list, there is a procedure that can set aside unrealistic physical requirements. This can be resolved with the Coordinator. Another procedure to circumvent the apathy in the employment of the handicapped is the seven-hundred-hour plan. This is more acceptable to personnel officers as it does not involve extensive "problems" in discharging employees on probation. A blind person may be tried out on a seven-hundred-hour program without having taken an examination and being placed on an eligible list--this would serve as a tryout. The seven-hundred-hour trial period is in contrast to the year of probational employment for applicants taken from certified lists. The seven-hundred-hour appointment can be more readily sold to personnel officers.

At the time a certified list is sent to an agency for recruitment purposes by the Civil Service Commission, it was recommended by Group II that the list be coded so that notification is sent to the appropriate vocational rehabilitation agency to contact the employer, but this should not tie the employer's hands. The purpose of this contact, besides the "selling aspect", would involve the technical know-how of the Counselor in terms of job modification and adaptation, as well as appropriate devices and appliances (the use of recording devices, tapes, disc machines, braille writers, typewriters, calculators, slide rules, and blown-up tables of all types through Xerox or other forms of large print). File cards listing resources are invaluable aids to the blind professional worker. It is the responsibility of the vocational rehabilitation agency and the client to have these aids and devices before he starts on the job.

It was stressed that many of our clients have proficiency in these aids through training and continued use learned in their years at college and during pre-vocational or vocational training. Coincident with aids and devices, reader services should be arranged by the client and the vocational rehabilitation agency before the client begins a job. This is a problem that should not be

foisted on the employer and the cost of such service must be the responsibility of the employee.

One of the participants elaborated upon the new type switchboard that is ideally engineered by the telephone company and which has materially advanced the effectiveness of blind switchboard operators.

How does vocational rehabilitation prepare clients for employment? Pre-vocational training is the development of alternate skills and work conditioning in order to bring out latent talents to compensate for the loss of vision. This involves training and mobility (self-travel), tactile skills, hearing, activities of daily living (eating), social graces, etc., as well as actual job skills.

How can the vocational rehabilitation agency find out where the appropriate jobs are? Each Civil Service Commission issues a Career Directory listing the professional jobs. This is published by Region and has some illustrative material. It is primarily intended for the college senior who the Civil Service Commission is trying to attract for entry jobs. This Directory spells out job requirements. Although there isn't any central listing of job vacancies, this data can be secured in another way from the Civil Service Commission who can supply vocational rehabilitation Counselors with the names of Federal agencies requesting varied types of personnel. Specific examinations may be "farmed out" where the work is highly specialized and peculiar to certain agencies, such as air traffic specialist with Federal Aviation Agency or engineers and scientists. Lists of these special Boards may be secured through contact with local Federal installations, or from Mr. Baer's office in Region II.

Is there apprehension by the employing officer that one employment will result in a flood of applications from disabled people? This is unlikely because of the wide variety of fields of endeavor. The only large group is the transcribing typists and here we recognize that in a pool arrangement there are many related clerical chores. There is a tendency to have one blind person out of a complement of five in the transcribing pool. We feel that this ratio allows for greater flexibility of the total staff and for greater acceptance of the blind person without detriment to the other workers. There are some reservations as to having too many blind people at any facility.

There was a question as to follow-up and availability of Counselors if problems should arise after the case is closed. There may be significant changes in vision, health, personality, work habits and capacities and the personnel officer has the right and the responsibility to take into consideration the review of these factors with the Counselor at any time. Ideally, the Counselors should make a yearly check, but this would be an intrusion of the individual's privacy and not possible because of extensive caseloads. It was the recommendation of the Group that the Federal agency manuals might contain a statement explaining that the vocational rehabilitation agencies are always available for consultation concerning any handicapped worker. The vocational rehabilitation agency should send a letter to the employer at the time the case is being closed; this would be reassuring to the employer and might be placed in the employee's file in the event there are personnel changes. This would also serve vocational rehabilitation at a future date in

in "follow-up orders" as the agency grows or if the worker is replaced.

We then had a lively discussion as to special benefits in the form of seniority. There was some feeling that pressure groups place the Federal agencies at a disadvantage and this is unfair should there be reductions in staff. The Counselors in our Group felt that special benefits should not be extended to workers and the only basis for retention should be seniority.

Ideally and therapeutically, all of us who live in this society have the right to work; however, Counselors should take caution in not over-selling the skills of their clients. Those of you in Civil Service are concerned with getting the worker who can do a good job and we assure you we recognize this. Some blind people may take a little more time than the initial breaking-in-period, but there are many plus factors which will more than compensate for this additional time. There seems to be less turnover as blind people remain longer on the same job. In the severe snowstorms over the years, blind workers have been able to get to their jobs despite any problems that may arise in self-travel. . . . blind workers were able to get to their jobs and to the training facilities much more consistently than our sighted colleagues.

Now we recognize as a reality factor that initially some employers accept blind people because of sympathy. Although this does take place, you Coordinators should be hard-hearted enough to say "what can this person do" and try to work out a reasonable plan with the Counselor. In this way, you have a role as a member of a team in working with the Counselor and this will tend to minimize any sympathetic involvement.

One of our participants raised the question of Federal Civil Service acting as a training ground to round out the client's vocational training. What we do in some instances is try to build added work tolerance and skills through placing clients in on-the-job training situations. We may go to the employer as a final step in the training process to give the individual a greater depth, understanding, and feeling of participation, as well as a rounding off. Would it be possible to use the facilities of Federal agencies to provide practical training and experience for some blind persons, allowing the vocational rehabilitation program to pay for any special costs or expenses? The suggestion was made that more information (such as eye conditions and visual factors) be made part of manuals and be included in the training of Coordinators. It is important that if there is residual vision present, the use of functional vision be interpreted to the Coordinators.

The recommendation was made that there be other short-term meetings between Coordinators and Counselors in order to further clarify many of the issues which were raised at this Conference. It is felt that it would be valuable if the Coordinators could visit training facilities to acquire a deeper understanding of the total services being extended to blind people who are enrolled in vocational rehabilitation programs.

### GROUP III

#### **A SURVEY OF OCCUPATIONS WITH OPPORTUNITIES FOR BLIND PERSONS**

by

Dermot P. Dunne, Group Leader

The report for my Group is in three sections: (1) some of the points we discussed; (2) one very firm recommendation; and (3) I would like to briefly talk about a mild controversy.

The Groups getting together, certainly my Group, was a really valuable experience to both of us because we learned, on the Federal side, how the state rehabilitation programs and Counselors and the private agency personnel operate, and they, in turn, learned a great deal about the Federal Civil Service, how it operates, its complexities, how you get in and so forth. There was a great deal of interchange of information.

In talking about Civil Service examinations, some misunderstandings were clarified for the rehabilitation Counselors. Assembled and unassembled examinations were described; how to get to know about examinations and those positions which do or do not require formal tests were discussed.

A suggestion was made, with which everyone was in accord, that the U. S. Civil Service Commission undertake a training program for rehabilitation Counselors. By such methods as having a week long seminar at a Civil Service Regional Office, rehabilitation Counselors can be indoctrinated in all the intricacies of obtaining and retaining Federal employment. In turn, the representative from New Jersey in our Group thought it would be a good idea if the Coordinators in the Federal service were to visit the various centers around the State and see how the rehabilitation programs operate.

Touching on the question of telephone operators and being with the General Services Administration, I am very conscious of what syntrex or direct dialing is doing to the employment of telephone operators. A question was raised as to whether or not the training of people to operate switchboards might not be something of a lost effort in the years to come because of this mechanization.

Another topic discussed was how blind people get to and from work. It was interesting to learn that the rehabilitation Counselors would come in and make the arrangements for training or whatever is needed to show this person how to get to and from the work site.

Those of us who represent Federal agencies were very much surprised to learn two things about clients who are being served by the rehabilitation programs: one was the average age of the group--which we're told in New York State is 45 years or more; some of us thought that, in the main, these were well-educated, young people eager to go to work, but it was pointed out that this is a group of people well along in years and this, of course, makes the situation more difficult. Another fact that gave us some concern is that 40 per cent of blind people who are being rehabilitated have other disabilities.

In ten major cities of the country, there are Federal Executive Boards composed of the top individual of any given Federal agency in that area. In the smaller cities--such as Columbia, South Carolina or Newark, New Jersey--there are newly established Federal Executive Councils patterned after the Executive Boards which are in the larger metropolitan areas. For example, in New York and New Jersey there are five Federal Personnel Associations of Personnel Officers, sponsored by the U. S. Civil Service Commission, and also a training officers' group and professional societies. These are the channels which rehabilitation agencies should use as a means of getting their program across and in creating a proper image of blindness through good public relations.

Our major recommendation is that every effort be made to hold further meetings between Coordinators and Counselors on a regular basis. It is felt more can be done for blind people through this continuous personal contact.

Two members in our Group, representing Federal agencies, have never been approached regarding the hiring of a blind person. Rapport between the Coordinators and Counselors will lead to placement for some blind persons who are qualified and available for employment, and this kind of direct contact will do more than the reading of job announcements and the mere filing of applications. Although serving as Coordinator for the General Services Administration --which operates in four States--and having other duties, I would be happy to meet regularly, even monthly, with Counselors from both States represented here; this would result in our better understanding blind people and the likelihood of finding jobs for them.

Now to the minor controversy: here we had an expression of three different points of view concerning lobbying and pressure groups. The rehabilitation Counselors, representing the States of New York and New Jersey, said this is not their approach; they do not want any special treatment for their clients. One of the members of the Group felt that it was somewhat unethical, or improper, to voice the fact that people should lobby. At the present time in the Federal Government, as a result of pressures or lobbying, there are so many special groups that are getting, not favorite, but special treatment. Because of this, there is no reason why those interested in blind people should not be in there lobbying, too. There is, as you know, a program for the employment of minority groups.....this has been given great emphasis during the past few years. There is a program for furthering the employment of women and you are all aware of this.....President Johnson has appointed women to some of the highest Governmental positions. There is a President's Committee for the Employment of the Handicapped, with which you are all familiar. There are also two programs for which we have been given special regulations: (1) the employment of the mentally retarded; and (2) the employment of former Peace Corps volunteers. There is also interest in employment for the aged.

So why not a program to promote employment of blind persons in the Federal Government, and why would it be inappropriate for you to get moving on it now!

## GROUP IV

### A LOOK AT PRESENT AND FUTURE NEEDS IN GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

by  
N. Kerner, Group Leader

Our Group consisted of the Rehabilitation Director of the New Jersey State Commission for the Blind and four of his associates, and six Federal agency personnel officers. In the beginning there was a general introduction of each of our agencies, our roles in those agencies, and the general purposes for the operation of these agencies in relation to the overall Governmental structure.

The Federal agencies represented had a personnel complement of more than thirty thousand people. The kinds of work represented at these Federal agencies was: shipbuilding; design; research and development; supply and support; and general manufacturing. The professions and trades represented were extremely wide and varied.

The Group then undertook to list the positions for which there is a firm and continuing need, both in New York and New Jersey, based on knowledge of the several programs and their personnel needs. The positions were: typists and stenographers; engineers and scientists; computer positions--including card punch operators and programmers; apprentices and helpers in the various trades; skilled journeymen; and unskilled workers such as cleaners, etc. It was pointed out that cleaning positions had a high attrition rate although the salary range is in the neighborhood of \$90 to \$100 per week.

Proceeding to the duties and responsibilities of the New Jersey State Commission for the Blind, it was stated that the Commission places from 125 to 200 blind people each year. There are estimated to be 8,000 blind people in the State of New Jersey of whom 4,800 are over 50 years old and 1,500 are school children.

The Group then undertook to define blindness and learned that only 1 out of 5 blind persons is totally without sight. The definition of legally blind persons is 20/200 in the better eye with correction, and this is further clarified as being a person with impaired vision who can see at 20 feet what a person with normal vision sees at 200 feet.

Discussion then centered its attention on the duties and responsibilities of a state agency for the blind with respect to vocational rehabilitation services. The duties encompass: counseling, guidance, physical restoration, training, education, and placement. Finally, the Commission has the authority to do whatever is required to help the blind person become employable.

Some examples of work being done by blind people are as follows: routine repetitive tasks such as inspecting and packaging; agriculture (dairying, farming, and poultry raising); machine operations, both complex and simple, including deburring, milling machine, grinding, and multiple spindle; hospital work such as clerical duty, nurse's aide, orderly and laundry work; work in many service occupations; vending stands; and ownership and operation of their own

businesses. A word of caution stressed the fact that because one blind person can perform a specific job, it does not mean that another is also able to do the same job, since each case must be treated individually.

Blind people have aptitudes and skills that must be developed in the same way as those of sighted people, through training and experience.

Summing up the process of effecting placement, as it is carried on by agencies for the blind, the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors stated that they desired the opportunity to visit Federal installations and to survey jobs.

In coming to a job, a blind person expects no sympathy. Counselors who place blind people expect them to perform as well as their co-workers; nevertheless, if there are personnel problems the Counselor and the agency will come in to work out the difficulty immediately. People who are found to be ready for job placement have received counseling and training and are believed to be fully qualified and competent. The philosophy in carrying out the placement process is that qualified blind and sighted applicants should have equal opportunity.

Turning to the Federal agencies, there was an explanation of Civil Service rules, methods of selecting personnel, the merit system, and how to file for a position. The Federal agencies in this Group were all a part of the Department of Defense and in that connection clarification was given as to the Department of Defense Priority Placement Program and the Civil Service Re-employment Priority Rules--which provide that anyone affected by reduction of force has priority placement rights ahead of outside applicants. After discussion, it was agreed that these rules and regulations should not be stumbling blocks in the placement of blind people.

The Group then began to work out what were called "statements of agreement":

- (1) The New Jersey State Commission for the Blind will keep in touch with the employment situation by arranging to secure Civil Service Job Announcements and will also arrange for staff members to visit Federal agencies, from time to time, to discuss the situation generally and specifically to survey positions for possible placements. Stress was given to the need for making regular visits to Civil Service installations, not relying entirely on the Civil Service Job Announcements for pertinent information;
- (2) The Federal agencies agreed to help the State Commission for the Blind by arranging the visits to their installations and allowing the Rehabilitation Counselors to see the work conditions, the work sites, and to meet the operating officials to learn of the experience and other work requirements;
- (3) It was agreed that the re-engineering of jobs would be necessary in some instances, but could be accomplished with the cooperation of both groups if economically feasible and efficient.

It was stressed here that the re-engineering would be of the same kind that might be required for other disabled people, or for persons with sight, who could perform the job, as required, by using a different technique or procedure;

- (4) It was further agreed that it would be recommended to the United States Civil Service Commission that there be a further expansion of its placement and public relations operations in order that the state agencies will better know where the job opportunities are;
- (5) It was felt that the Civil Service Commission and the Boards of Examiners should take steps to insure that the experiences and abilities of blind eligibles were fully described in their applications and that this can best be done through personal interview, or otherwise, to insure better understanding and wider placement opportunities. There was some feeling that a blind person was somewhat penalized in the application process and was often unable to get beyond this hurdle because of inadequate opportunity to explain in more detail his experience and qualifications;
- (6) It was also felt that state rehabilitation agencies involved in the placement of blind people should train the blind eligible to sell himself through his own personality, the same as a sighted person who is interested in securing job placement; and
- (7) The Group understood that, in some instances, green tags were placed on the applications of blind eligibles by the Civil Service Commission. The Group felt that there were some discriminatory implications in this procedure and recommended that this procedure be reviewed by a committee set up through the Civil Service Commission and embodying representatives of the state agencies for the blind to determine its validity and necessity.

The Group felt that it did a great amount of work and that such meetings should continue in the future, either formally or informally.

SUMMARY  
by  
Wesley D. Sprague

It must be acknowledged that the participants at this Conference foresee long range potential good from the opportunities afforded. All wholeheartedly agree that free exchange between similar personnel should be fostered by all who are concerned with like problems.

Each group leader reported that tentative meetings had already been scheduled for members within their proximal group so that the potential value of the Conference would continue to grow.

When one considers the potential employment possibilities that are being effected by this getting-togetherness, one readily realizes that the costs involved in providing such a seminar are insignificant.

The members of the Planning Committee for this Conference therefore recommend to the Federal and State authorities that they encourage their supervisory personnel of all levels to enter into similar workshops whereby stimulation, understanding, and personal growth may be effected for the good of the handicapped personnel whom it is our duty and privilege to serve.



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CONFERENCE TO PROMOTE THE  
EMPLOYMENT OF BLIND PERSONS  
IN U.S. CIVIL SERVICE OCCUPATIONS.

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